there are millions who have given up comfortable homes and exchanged them for a daily communion with death ; multitudes have given up those whom they love best. Let the nation as a whole place its comforts, its luxuries, its indulgences, its elegances on a national altar consecrated by such sacrifices as these men have made. Let us proclaim during the War a national Lent. . . ."

This account of the food position did not in any way exaggerate the serious nature of the food problem with which we were now confronted. Government neglect and bad weather had combined to menace our resources. The acreage sown with winter wheat was less than ever. Such as there was had been damaged by weather. It was over-late to prepare additional ground on any considerable *toostect* sca^e ^or sPr*n§ sowing. The prospects *for1917* f°r ^e 1917 harvest were dark. Our expectation of being able to maintain our food supplies until that harvest was reaped were darkening with every week's returns of ships sunk by the submarines. But if my speech fairly reflected the blackness of the outlook, it reflected no less the practical and energetic policy which the Govern-ment had resolved to adopt.

On 13th December, 1916, six days before my speech, and only four since the Government had been formed, the new War Cabinet held a special session to consider the Food question and the

organisation of home production. Lord Devonport, the new Food Controller, and Captain Bathurst (now Lord Bledisloe) as centre back of the new Food Department, were present, along with Mr. R. E. Prothero (now Lord Ernie), the President of the Board of